

DEAN DOCUMENT

2012 Session Review

The 2012 Legislative Session came to an end last Friday, March 9th, with the traditional dropping of the handkerchiefs signifying Sine Die, or the last day of regular session. I commend my colleagues in the Florida Senate for their hard work and a job well done.

We stayed true to our commitment to balance the budget while not raising taxes or fees. This year's budget, totaling over \$70 billion, restores \$1 billion to K-12 education while also providing \$120 million in tax relief to Floridians. Included in this tax relief package are economic development incentives which will be utilized by the Department of Economic Opportunity to revitalize our economy by creating jobs as we continue on the path to recovery.



During the 60-day Legislative Session, a total of 292 bills were passed by both the Senate and the House. This was quite an accomplishment with the once-a-decade process of redistricting as well as overcoming a \$1.4 billion budget shortfall. From the 292 bills, I was successful in passing 13 of my own. The two bills with the largest impact statewide were SB 820, relating to septic tanks, and SB 2060 which establishes rules for numeric nutrient criteria. The repeal of the current septic tank law and the halt placed on the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's implementation of numeric nutrient criteria will save Florida homeowners and taxpayers millions of dollars. You can further research my bills and other bills passed this Session by visiting www.flsenate.gov.

I was also successful in providing \$100,000 in this year's budget to help clean up King's Bay in Citrus County. It is my hope this will accelerate efforts already underway to restore this pristine area to the condition I remember as a boy growing up. Another huge accomplishment this Session was the collective effort of the Jefferson County Delegation, alongside the Jefferson community, in helping keep Jefferson Correctional Institution open. We were able to save approximately 177 jobs which would have had a significant impact on this rural community. In addition, with the aid of my friends in Baker County, we were able to keep 34 jobs at the Northeast Florida State Hospital from being privatized, reducing the potential impact on families in those communities.

This was still a very difficult Session with the tough cuts which had to be made. However, I believe the accomplishments the Legislature made this year will set us on a path to economic recovery and stability. It is my hope we will continue to climb out of this recession and be stronger than ever before.

I have enjoyed sending you this update every week of the 2012 Legislative Session. I hope you have found it informative and I look forward to keeping you up-to-date again next year. In the interim, should you have any questions or concerns, always feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Legislation Sponsored by Senator Dean which passed in the 2012 Session:

Repeal of Statewide Septic Tank Mandate

(Language from SB 820 was passed in HB 1092)

The language from Senator Dean's Senate Bill 820 which was passed in House Bill 1092, repeals the mandatory statewide inspection program established in Senate Bill 550. It establishes an optional, standard inspection program for all counties and municipalities to be administered by county health departments. This optional program requires septic systems to be inspected every 5 years for operational integrity and to be pumped. Counties and municipalities containing a first magnitude spring must opt out or adopt the program by January 1, 2013. All counties or municipalities which do not contain a first magnitude spring may choose to opt into the program. A county or municipality may adopt the program in all or part of its geographic jurisdiction. HB 1092 will exempt all residential units with a 1 bedroom to 1 acre or greater ratio.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Package

(Senate Bill 804 passed as HB 7025)

Senate Bill 804 pertained to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. It reduces blue crab soft shell commercial license fee from \$250 to \$125. The bill strengthens penalties for lobster trap theft which recently has been estimated to lose \$4 million annually. SB 804 redirects one hundred percent of the Florida Panther Specialty license plate to be used for programs to protect the endangered Florida Panther.

Premises Liability

(Senate Bill 802 passed as HB 313)

Senate Bill 802 allows private property owners who provide outdoor recreational opportunities on their properties to enter into written agreements with the state, as opposed to formal leases, and still receive the benefit of the limitation of liability. The bill also provides limitation of liability protection to private property owners who make their properties available to specific persons, as opposed to "the public," for the purpose of hunting, fishing or wildlife viewing. To limit liability, the landowner must provide notice of the liability limits to the person or persons using the land. The property owner must not derive any profit from patronage of the property for outdoor recreational purposes; however, reimbursement of reasonable costs and expenses may be included in the agreement. The intent of this legislation is to offer the opportunity for private landowners to open up their land for hunting, fishing or wildlife viewing.

Numeric Nutrient Criteria

(Senate Bill 2060 passed in HB 7051)

Senate Bill 2060 supports the state's right to direct and establish its own set of scientific criteria for Florida's bodies of water. The goal of SB 2060 is to support proposed state water quality rules regarding numeric nutrients and would replace controversial federal rules which would be difficult and costly to meet. The current standards held by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hold Florida's drainage canals to the same water quality standards as the state's lakes and rivers. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) filed a petition in April with the EPA initiating a rule development for state standards and requesting the EPA to withdraw its federally enforced numeric nutrient criteria and its promulgated criteria. The DEP rules were based on years of research and designed to protect public health and preserve well-balanced Florida ecosystems. These rules, brought on by the DEP, protect Florida water bodies, while the EPA's do so regardless of water body health.

Citrus County Enterprise Zone

(Senate Bill 806 passed in House Bill 7087)

Senate Bill 806 allows Citrus County to apply to the Department of Economic Opportunity for an enterprise zone with an application deadline of December 31, 2012. Citrus County will be on the same playing field with counties in its area including Hernando, Levy, Marion and Sumter. An enterprise zone is designed to encourage economic development and restoration in blighted or economically depressed communities by a combination of state and local business incentives to encourage these zones. The Citrus County Economic Development Council, the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, and the Citrus County Tourism Development Council all agree on the positive impact the enterprise zone will have on Citrus County.

Kings Bay Memorial

(Senate Memorial 1614 passed as House Memorial 611)

Senate Memorial 1614 urges Congress to direct the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reconsider the proposed rule to designate Kings Bay a manatee refuge and requests, in lieu of the rule, that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service partner with state and local governments to seek long-term solutions to manatee protection.

Citrus County Local Bill

(Senate Bill 1034 passed as House Bill 637)

Senate Bill 1034 allows a Citrus County restaurant with a liquor license that has between 2,500 and 4,000 square feet to have a cocktail lounge or open bar on the premises. This lounge or bar can serve up to ten percent of the total capacity of the restaurant. This also allows beverage consumption not to be limited to tables only.

Road Names

(Senate Bill 406 passed as House Bill 7039)

Senate Bill 406 provides for legislative designations of transportation facilities for honorary or memorial purposes, does not officially change the current names.

Designations were submitted for the following counties: Alachua, Bay, Gulf, Brevard, Bradford, Broward, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Hamilton, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Orange, Pasco, Pinellas, Putnam, Union, and Washington. All road designations contained in Senator Dean's Senate Bill 406 were for Military Designations.

911 Operators

(Senate Bill 514 passed as House Bill 1227)

Senate Bill 514 authorizes a sworn state-certified law enforcement officer to perform as a 911 public safety dispatcher on an occasional or limited basis. The officer must pass the 911 public safety dispatcher certification examination prior to performing these duties. An officer who fails the examination must complete a Department of Health approved training program before retaking the examination. This legislation will provide relief to fiscally constrained counties while maintaining public safety.

Donor Information

(Senate Bill 810 passed as House Bill 7015)

Senate Bill 810 reenacts the public records exemption which provides a donor or prospective donor to publicly owned house museums designated by the U.S. Department of Interior as National Historic Landmarks who desires to remain anonymous. There are only two National Historic Landmarks publicly owned house museums in Florida that are eligible for the exemption. The two houses are the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings home in Cross Creek and the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens located in the Coconut Grove area of the City of Miami.

Federal Environmental Regulating

(Senate Bill 994 passed as House Bill 4123)

The bill repeals an obsolete reporting requirement related to the development of a mechanism or plan to consolidate federal and state wetland permitting programs. All reports have been completed since 2005 and the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation has confirmed the statute is unnecessary.

Vietnam Veteran Memorial

(Senate Memorial 1080 passed as House Memorial 205)

Senate Memorial 1080 urges Congress to initiate and support a nationwide effort to commemorate, in 2013, the 40th anniversary of the end of the United States involvement in the Vietnam War, and demonstrate the nation's appreciation for the honorable service and sacrifice of Vietnam Veterans. This memorial also asks Congress to authorize the minting of a commemorative anniversary medal to express the nation's appreciation for the honorable service of Vietnam Veterans.

A special thank you to my staff for their hard work during the 2012 Session:

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